

**Mayor's column for
The Beacon
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Did you know that this is an election year? No, not a presidential election! And thank goodness for that, because I doubt the nation could take another year like last year. And not a gubernatorial election either! And thank goodness . . .

Three City Council seats are up for election this November. The seats are currently held by Deanna Dawson, Jeff Wilson, and Michael Plunkett, none of whom at this point have announced formally their intentions to run again. However, it wouldn't take much for anyone to figure out that an election is imminent if you read the papers or watch the Council meetings on television.

Speculation always runs high this time of year about who will decide to run for City Council seats. It's always fascinating to me to listen to the "chatter" about who's running against whom or which current Councilmember is considering switching seats and running against another current Councilmember. Or will those who have run for Council before without success mount another campaign?

All of that speculation will come to an end this summer when it's time to sign on the dotted line and pay the filing fee. In the meantime, we can expect the following: rhetoric, letters to the editor, longer Council meetings, posturing, and lots of promises. Did I mention rhetoric?

A more important discussion should center on how we can attract more candidates to become involved in city government. And by involved, I don't mean coming to Council meetings every Tuesday night and offering your opinion on every topic on the agenda. It's easy to show up for an hour a week and criticize every Council action, or provide negative feedback on well-intended motives, or berate a Councilmember because they don't agree with your point of view.

So by becoming involved, I'm talking about putting your money where your mouth is, and actually running for political office. It takes real commitment to spend hours studying issues that affect your community and real commitment to show up each and every Tuesday night ready to discuss those issues in a constructive way. And it takes some real intestinal fortitude to sit quietly while someone in the audience comes to the microphone and attacks you personally for doing what you believe is the right thing to do for the city.

Frankly, I'm not sure why some citizens seem to think that they can berate elected officials at every opportunity. And furthermore, if a speaker is trying to sway the Council to their point of view, berating them is hardly the way to do it. I'm also amazed that one person can stand before the City Council and represent himself or herself as speaking for "all" the citizens of Edmonds. I've yet to see anyone, citizen or elected official, who represents "all" citizens' points of view. It's impossible.

As you read this, I will be in Japan visiting our sister city, Hekinan, so I will miss the City Council meeting . . . I mean, I won't be there—I won't actually miss it! During the first meeting of the month I also had a scheduling conflict and missed that meeting as well. But I did watch it, like many of you, on television.

I saw an exchange between a speaker at the podium and a Councilmember that epitomized exactly what I had been writing about. Apparently a citizen, because of his disagreement with a Councilmember's point of view, chose to call the Councilmember's

employer to voice his complaint. That act crossed the line of civility and respect, and is a prime example of why people don't want to run for public office.

Elected officials often bite their tongues and don't respond to these kinds of personal attacks. This time a citizen went too far. As I said earlier, it's an election year, so if you don't agree with the policy that Councilmembers are setting, put your money where your mouth is!